

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-07 TRSE-00 OMB-01 IO-13 DHA-02
VO-03 SCA-01 /086 W
-----069575 101258Z /44

P R 101221Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0541
INFO USMISSION USBERLIN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY BERLIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 13042

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV GE GW WB
SUBJECT: FRG/GDR "SOUNDINGS" EXPECTED TO BEGIN
AUGUST 12

REFS: (A) PRAGUE 2015; (B) BERLIN 6479; (C) BONN 11537

BEGIN SUMMARY. THE LONG-AWAITED "SOUNDINGS" ON A NEW
FRG/GDR NEGOTIATING PACKAGE ARE EXPECTED TO BEGIN ON
AUGUST 12. MINISTER OF STATE WISCHNEWSKI IN THE FEDERAL
CHANCELLERY INFORMED THE AMBASSADOR ON AUGUST 8 THAT
HE PLANS MEET WITHGDR'S KOHL IN BONN ON AUGUST 12
FOR THAT PURPOSE. WISCHNEWSKI SAID THAT THE RECENT DELAY HAD
BEEN THE FAULT OF THE GDR AND SPECULATED THAT HONECKER
HAD BEEN UNABLE TO RESPOND POSITIVELY TO THE FRG
PROPOSALS UNTIL AFTER HIS MEETING WITH BREZHNEV IN THE
CRIMEA. THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE IN THE SCOPE OR
SUBSTANCE OF THE FRG'S PROPOSALS, BUT THE FRG EXPECTA-
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TION IS THAT, AFTER THE SOUNDINGS ON THE ENTIRE PACKAGE
HAVE BEEN COMPLETED, THERE WILL BE A DIVISION OF
LABOR. THOSE ITEMS WHICH BOTH SIDES AGREE ARE
NEGOTIABLE WILL BE HANDLED FOR THE FRG BY GAUS IN EAST
BERLIN. CERTAIN "HUMANITARIAN" ITEMS WILL BE HANDLED
IN THE LAWYERS' CHANNEL (VOGEL/STANGE). WISCHNEWSKI
COMMENTED THAT HONECKER'S REPORTED HOPES FOR A SCHMIDT/

HONECKER MEETING MAY NOT MATERIALIZE.
FINALLY, HE SAID THAT THE CHANCELLERY WILL ASSUME MORE
RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONDUCT OF FRG/GDR RELATIONS
IN THE FUTURE AND THAT THE MINISTRY OF INNER-GERMAN
AFFAIRS WILL BE REDUCED LARGELY TO CONCERNING ITSELF
WITH "HUMANITARIAN" CASES. END SUMMARY .

1. AT AN AUGUST 8 MEETING WITH MINISTER OF STATE
WISCHNEWSKI, THE AMBASSADOR WAS INFORMED THAT THE LONG-
AWAITED FRG/GDR "SOUNDINGS" MAY TAKE PLACE ON AUGUST 12
AT A MEETING IN BONN BETWEEN WISCHNEWSKI AND GDR
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE KOHL. IT IS PLANNED FOR A
PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT TO BE ISSUED ANNOUNCING THE MEETING
LATER THIS WEEK AND FOR THE FACT OF THE MEETING TO BE
PUBLICLY CONFIRMED AFTERWARDS, WITHOUT FURTHER DETAILS
BEING GIVEN. WISCHNEWSKI AND KOHL PLAN TO MEET
PRIVATELY, ACCOMPANIED ONLY BY NOTE-TAKERS.

2. WISCHNEWSKI SAID THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE
IN THE SUBSTANCE OR SCOPE OF THE FRG PROPOSALS. HIS
EXPECTATION IS THAT THE PRELIMINARY SOUNDINGS WILL
RESULT IN A SEPARATION OF THE QUESTIONS TO BE DISCUSSED
INTO THREE CATEGORIES -- THOSE MATTERS ABOUT WHICH
EITHER THE FRG OR THE GDR IS NOT PREPARED TO TALK,
THOSE ABOUT WHICH BOTH SIDES ARE READY TO NEGOTIATE,
AND FINALLY THOSE MATTERS WHICH WILL HAVE TO BE
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NEGOTIATED IN "UNOFFICIAL CHANNELS." MATTERS IN THE
SECOND CATEGORY WILL BE NEGOTIATED BY FRG PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE GAUS IN EAST BERLIN (AND PRESUMABLY
THE BERLIN SENAT INsofar AS THEY CONCERN ONLY WEST
BERLIN). THE THIRD CATEGORY INCLUDES "HUMANITARIAN"
QUESTIONS, E.G. CASES OF EAST GERMANS SEEKING ASYLUM
IN FRG EMBASSIES (HE REFERRED TO THE RECENT PRAGUE
INCIDENT, REF A) AND THE AGE AT WHICH PENSIONERS CAN
LEGALLY TRAVEL OUT OF THE GDR. THE "UNOFFICIAL" CHANNEL
WILL BE THAT OF LAWYERS VOGEL AND STANGE.

3. WISCHNEWSKI STATED THAT HONECKER WOULD LIKE A
MEETING WITH SCHMIDT BUT THAT THE LATTER IS NOT
INTERESTED IN A MEETING AT THIS TIME (REF B). SUCH A
VISIT MIGHT BE CONSIDERED, HOWEVER, IF THE SOUNDINGS
GO WELL.

4. WHILE HE DID NOT PROVIDE DETAILS OF RECENT EXCHANGES
LEADING UP TO THE AGREEMENT TO BEGIN THE SOUNDINGS,
WISCHNEWSKI EMPHASIZED THAT THE FRG HAD LONG BEEN READY
TO INITIATE THE PROCESS BUT THAT THE GDR HAD DELAYED.
HE SPECULATED THAT THIS MAY HAVE BEEN BECAUSE HONECKER

WAS UNABLE TO MOVE AHEAD BEFORE HIS MEETING WITH
BREZHNEV IN THE CRIMEA. WISCHNEWSKI SAID THAT HE HAS

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NOW BEEN TOLD "CONFIDENTIALLY" THAT THE GDR IS PREPARING
AN ANSWER TO THE CHANCELLOR'S RECENT LETTER TO HONECKER
AND THAT THE FRG IS EXPECTING A "SIGNAL" DURING THE
COURSE OF THIS WEEK -- PRESUMABLY A RESPONSE TO SCHMIDT.
ALLUDING TO CRITICISMS OF THE CHANCELLOR FOR NOT GETTING
THE SOUNDINGS UNDERWAY BEFORE NOW, WISCHNEWSKI REITERATED
THAT THE GDR IS NOT BLAMELESS FOR THE DELAY. IN THE
CONTEXT OF THE APPARENT GDR WILLINGNESS TO MOVE AHEAD AT
LONG LAST, HE SAID THAT THE FRG IS ALSO INTERESTED IN
AVOIDING ANY FURTHER DELAY. THE FRG DOES NOT, FOR
EXAMPLE, PLAN TO MAKE AN ISSUE OF A SHOOTING INCIDENT
WHICH OCCURRED ON THE FRG/GDR BORDER IN LOWER SAXONY ON
AUGUST 7, PROBABLY BY DRUNKEN GDR TROOPS, AS IT WOULD
NOT LIKE SUCH INCIDENTS TO INTERFERE WITH THE SOUNDINGS.

5. THE CHANCELLERY HAS APPARENTLY INFORMED THE MAJOR
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INTEREST PARTIES OF ITS READINESS TO MOVE AHEAD. WISCHNEWSKI REFERRED TO THE CHANCELLOR'S DISCUSSIONS IN BERLIN WITH GOVERNING MAYOR STOBBE OVER THE WEEKEND. WISCHNEWSKI HAD ALSO DISCUSSED THE PENDING NEGOTIATIONS WITH CDU CHAIRMAN HELMUT KOHL AND CDU FOREIGN POLICY SPECIALIST WERNER MARX. HE IMPLIED THAT THE CDU WAS IN AGREEMENT WITH THE PLAN.

6. WITHOUT PREDICTING THE IMPACT ON THE PENDING NEGOTIATIONS, WISCHNEWSKI COMMENTED ON GROWING GDR ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES. HE SAID THAT THE RECENT ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE OF THE GDR HAS BEEN POORER THAN EXPECTED AND THAT, WHILE THE EXPORT/IMPORT GAP HAD NARROWED LAST YEAR, IT HAS SINCE WIDENED. IN ADDITION, THE GDR HAS BEEN REQUIRED TO EXPAND ITS TRADE WITH CEMA.

7. WISCHNEWSKI DISCUSSED PENDING INTERNAL FRG REORGANIZATIONS OF RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE INNER-GERMAN AREA. IN CONNECTION WITH THE PENDING TRANSFER OF GAUS' DEPUTY, BRAEUTIGAM, FROM EAST BERLIN TO WISCHNEWSKI'S STAFF IN THE CHANCELLERY, HE SAID THAT THE CHANCELLERY WAS TAKING ON OVER-ALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE HANDLING OF INNER-GERMAN RELATIONS. IN THE FUTURE, HE SAID, THE MINISTRY OF INNER-GERMAN RELATIONS WILL BE RELEGATED TO DEALING PRIMARILY WITH HUMANITARIAN MATTERS.

8. COMMENT: THE FRG HAS BEEN CRITICIZED FOR FAILING TO BEGIN THE "SOUNDINGS" SOONER, AND WISCHNEWSKI'S COMMENTS REGARDING GDR DELAYS -- WHILE NOT GIVING THE INS AND OUTS OF ANY RECENT EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES -- SEEM DESIGNED TO MAKE CLEAR THAT THE FRG IS NOT ALONE AT FAULT. THE PLAN FOR MOVING AHEAD ON THE

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"HUMANITARIAN" ISSUES IN PARALLEL WITH THE OTHER NEGOTIATIONS, EVEN THOUGH NOT IN FORMAL GOVERNMENTAL CHANNELS, WILL BE WELCOMED BY THE CDU, WHICH HAS CRITICIZED THE FRG FOR WHAT IT CONSIDERED AN ATTEMPT TO SOLVE ONLY THE "PRACTICAL" PROBLEMS WHILE LEAVING ASIDE SOME OF THE MORE DIFFICULT POLITICAL ONES. NONETHELESS, IT CAN BE EXPECTED THAT THE CDU WILL CONTINUE TO CRITICIZE THE FRG FOR NOT DOING ENOUGH IN THIS AREA.
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